

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON ANDAMAN BIRDS¹

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This paper covers the notes on Andaman birds obtained during the course of my last two trips to Car and Great Nicobar which have already been reported upon (*JBNHS* 75 : 744-772).

The first two items relate to records from Battye Malve, south of Car Nicobar, and are really inadvertent omissions from the last paper.

15. *Fregetta tropica melanogaster* (Gould)
(Southern Indian Ocean) Duskyvented Storm Petrel.

On 12 April 1977, a dark petrel with white underparts and in flight not unlike a whimbrel, was seen far away, off Battye Malve, and may have been of this species?

19. *Phaethon lepturus lepturus* Daudin
(Mauritius) Longtailed Tropic Bird.

On 21 March 1976, about an hour before we reached N. Cinque I., we saw a large white tropic bird in the distance with dark markings on the back which was probably this species. While talking to the sailors of M.V. *Yonge* on the return trip (after seeing the storm petrel mentioned above), they referred to a white long-tailed bird, all white, with webbed feet, a black streak through the eye and yellowish orange bill, which had taken refuge on the boat during a shower of rain, about two months ago, roughly off Battye Malve, south of Car Nicobar. The bird refused to take the food offered and was duly eaten. The tail feathers 17 inches long, had been preserved and their identity has been confirmed at the Smithsonian.

200. *Spilornis elgini elgini* (Blyth) (S. Andaman Island) Dark Andaman Serpent Eagle.

The examination of two specimens of *Spilornis elgini abbotti* Richmond (1903) from Simalur I., off the north-west coast of Sumatra borrowed from Rijksmuseum N.H., Leiden, leaves no doubt that *elgini* is a different species from *cheela*. I had overlooked the fact that Peter's *BIRDS OF THE WORLD* (1931, 1 : 273) had accepted *elgini* and *minimus* as two species both separate from *cheela*.

In April 1976, I saw 2 dark *elgini* and one pale *davisoni* in the Port Blair Zoo, and have the following comparative notes :

	<i>elgini</i>	<i>davisoni</i>
(a) Darker & smaller		Paler & larger
(b) Bill :		
thicker & shorter		thinner & longer
(c) Lower belly & vent :		
spotted		barred
(d) Call :		
Deep short whistle & also sharp rattling <i>tuk-tuk-tuk</i>		<i>phui-phui-phui</i> , not unlike Indian <i>cheela</i> at distance
(e) Legs & feet :		
yellowish & smoother		paler, less yellowish & rougher
(f) Tarsus :		
central line of large scales		hexagonal scales all over
(g) Head & back concolorous		head blackish & darker than rest of plumage ; traces of grey cheek patch

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<p><i>elgini</i></p> <p>(h) sits in more owl-like posture</p> <p>(i) head broader</p>	<p><i>davisoni</i></p> <p>narrower</p>	<p>315a. Turnix tanki albiventris Hume (Andamans) Andaman Yellowlegged Button Quail</p>
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Brown 1968 (EAGLES, HAWKS & FALCONS OF THE WORLD 1 pl. 41) illustrates the immature of *elgini* as similar to the adult, only slightly paler all over, and with a whitish head. Some time back Dr. W. Meise drew my attention to Stresemann's statement that the young of *elgini* did not have white underparts as in all races of *cheela* in which this plumage is known. This acceptance of two species makes it much easier to understand *S. elgini* and *S. cheela davisoni* living side by side, though with varying habits, rather than as races of the same species. A *davisoni* obtained at Pyinmalana, South Andaman, in March 1972 contained remains of a small mammal (rat?).

In *JBNHS* 68 (2) p. 397 I have referred to the first publication of the name being in *Ibis* for January 1863, and not in the *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal* for the same month, which I said, was dated February. This is not quite correct but it includes the proceeding of a meeting held on 4 February 1863. Inquiry at the British Ornithologists Union indicates that there is no reason to believe that the *Ibis* was not published in January, and the first publication would have to be accepted therein.

The same remarks would apply to the first description of the Rail (*Rallus canningi*) and the Tree Pie (*Dendrocitta bayleyi*) published under the same circumstances.

Hume (1873, *Stray Feathers* 1, p. 310) described this from the Andamans 'as close to *maculosa* with a perfectly white abdomen'. He adds that the specimen is an indifferent one and that he is provisionally suggesting the name *albiventris*. This was accepted in Sharpe's CATALOGUE OF BIRDS IN BRITISH MUSEUM (22: 545) and Blanford's FAUNA (4: 154), both indicating that it was much rarer in the Andamans than in the Central Nicobars. Stuart Baker (5: 456) synonymised it with *tanki* (Bengal, later restricted to northern suburbs of Calcutta) but refers only to birds from the Nicobars. The species has not been found on Car or Great Nicobar, and the three which I obtained at Trinkut and Camorta (*JBNHS* 64: 158) though no doubt different from those from India and Burma, can scarcely be said to have white bellies. A juvenile ♀ obtained by de Roepstorff at Camorta on 24 April 1876 has its wings in quill and is paler than three adults from the same area available for examination. At Camorta, it was seen feeding on the road, when the yellow of the bill, legs and feet, was very prominent.

Mr. S. V. Chatterji, I.F.S., told me that one had been caught in a house at Port Blair (1976) and died at the local zoo. Without seeing some material from the Andamans, it is not possible to comment upon the validity of *albiventris*.

383. **Charadrius placidus** J. E. Gray (Nepal),
Longbilled Ringed Plover

Sp. No. 156 in Tytler collection in Lahore is marked '*Charadrius longipes*

(presumably David 1854—HA). ♀ Andaman Islands', which according to the synonymy in Stuart Baker's FAUNA is *Charadrius placidus* not previously recorded from these islands. The identity of the specimen needs confirmation.

418. *Calidris subminutus* (Middendorff)
(Stanovoi Mountains and mouth of Uda) Longtoed Stint

1 ♂ 1 ♀ Dhanikheri, South Andamans, 20 March 1977.

In spite of the paucity of earlier records, I obtained specimens while looking for snipe on all three recent trips out of parties of about 8/10 birds.

The 12 specimens now available for examination consist of 3 ♂♂ and 9 ♀♀. Their measurements overlap but the females are slightly larger than the males. (see Table.)

536. *Streptopelia tranquebarica humilis*
(Temminck) (Bengal and Luzon)
Red Turtle Dove

On 18 March 1976, they were calling everywhere at Port Blair and a female was seen on a nest 20 ft. up in a large tree (6 April).

548. *Psittacula eupatria magnirostris* (Ball)
(Andaman Islands) Large Parakeet

On 6 April 1976 a female was seen bobbing her head up and down on a branch a little below a male, obviously soliciting. The male bent over with open bill and the female thrust hers inside, then withdrew. This was repeated four times before they flew away. Also seen entering a hole in a tree.

603. *Centropus (sinensis) andamanensis*
Beavan's Crow Pheasant

At Port Blair, on 6 April 1976, a bird with a pale, almost white head was heard calling from an exposed position in a tree. The bill was held in front and

TABLE

		Wing	Bill	Tarsus	Tail	Middletoe without claw
♂♂	..	90-92	17.7, 18.7, 19	19, 19.6, 20	34, 37	20, 21, 21.2
♀♀	..	90-100	18-20.9	19-22	34-39	19-22
		av. 93.2	av. 19.7		45	
(FAUNA ♂♀)		87-95	17-19	c. 20-21	34-36	-)

438. *Esacus magnirostris magnirostris*
(Vieillot) (Australia) Great Stone Plover

Pairs were noted on Sir Hugh Rose and North Cinque islands and I have referred to their trusting nature in the introduction to my last para on Great Nicobar (JBNHS 75, p. 745).

pointed downwards, and the feathers on the head slightly raised, every time it called. Another called 'kuk' and then rattled off a series of short *kuk-kuk-kuk* (over 20 times) and quite unlike the calls of *C. sinensis* around Bombay. After sunset, several called together from different places, the area resounding with their calls.

In JBNHS 64(2) : 17 I had referred to the males, which at least in collections were scarcer than females, being smaller. Two additional males from South Andaman both have their wings only 173 mm, and tails 232, 235 mm.

One obtained on 23 April 1977 is marked as with enlarged gonads.

679. **Caprimulgus macrurus andamanicus** Hume (Jolly Boys Island, S. Andamans)
Longtailed Nightjar

23809 ♀ Landfall Island

Head more heavily streaked than earlier specimens and interspaces and underparts also darker.

742. **Halcyon chloris davisoni** Sharpe (Aberdeen, S. Andamans) Andaman
Whitecollared Kingfisher

♂ Landfall Island, 15 April 1972.

In my Catalogue (JBNHS 69, p. 546), I have measured the bills from feathers of a ♂ and 2 ♀♀ from the Andamans as 47, 43, 42 ; the present specimen measures 44.6, all being larger than indicated in INDIAN HANDBOOK (4 : 98) 38-41 mm.

764. **Upupa epops saturata** Lönnerberg (Kjachta, Southern Transbaicalia)
Hoopoe

The de Roepstorffe collection contains a male hoopoe said to have been obtained in South Andaman on 10 October 1876. The head is pale as in nominate *epops*, but the first primary is all black on one side and has white spots on the other. It was identified by Dr. Ripley as *saturata*. The species has not been recorded from this area before.

983. **Artamus** sp. Swallow Shrike

On North Cinque Island (19 March 1976), I noted several swallow shrikes as very similar to Bombay birds and quite different from dark, white-vented *A. leucorhynchus humei* from Port Blair. This remains unexplained.

1903. **Dicaeum concolor virescens** Hume (Neighbourhood of Port Blair) Plain-coloured Flowerpecker.

On 19 March 1976, a bird with a bright orange lower mandible was being fed by dark-billed parents. The young bird while waiting for its parents, often picked and swallowed small yellow berries after testing them with its bill.